



The Town of
Duxbury, Massachusetts

Bay Farm Conservation Area

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Whether you are a bird watcher, angler, dog walker or simply covet a stroll through waving fields to spectacular water views, you will enjoy Bay Farm. On its 80 acres no other parcel of land offers more value per acre. You can explore short trails leading to a sandy beach, a rocky ledge with tidal pools, access to deep channel fishing, marshland, Indian artifacts and a rolling countryside grassland with an "unparalleled view of the bay". The 42nd Parallel runs through the Kingston side of Bay farm.

Bay Farm

A majority of Bay Farm is open field covered in the summertime with wildflowers and singing birds. This open field attracts a variety of wildlife. From the delightful chorus of the bobolink singing from the tops of the long grass to the long cries of raptors such as red-tailed hawks, birds are probably the most plentiful. The field is also utilized by fox and coyote for hunting, the grazing of white-tailed deer and in the warm evenings of June you can see a laser light show of fireflies.

Bay Farm, which is located in two towns, is an excellent example of forest succession. At the turn of the century there were few forests in Duxbury. Trees were cut for building ships, for masts, firewood and other wood products as well as for farming. Because the Duxbury portion of Bay Farm is mowed each year, forest encroachment does not occur. The Kingston portion of the property has not been mowed and forest encroachment is quite evident. So as you are walking through the cedar hollow you can marvel at the re-growth over the past 20 years.

Town Landing

The acquisition of Bay Farm was not always planned for what it is used for today. The site was originally the setting for a new town landing. The new dock was proposed to compensate for an over-crowding of the other town landings such as Ellison Beach at Shipyard Lane and Howland's Landing. The landing was proposed to have an access road that cut right through the middle of the land called Bay Farm Rd and a 2500-ft parking area.

Subdivision

The second recommendation for the Bay Farm land was to develop the land with a minimum of

30 buildable lots. Homes on the waterfront were to be sold for \$35-50, 000 dollars and "*anyone familiar with attempting to purchase waterfront property in Duxbury knows what a price such property commands from the seller.*" To develop this land was deemed "just PLAIN GOOD BUSINESS JUDGEMENT".

The Conservation Commission recommended that Bay Farm be purchased and preserved. The Conservation Commission recognized the opportunity to preserve the last great tract of open waterfront property in Duxbury.

A Farm Story

Discovery of Indian artifacts at Bay Farm tells us this picturesque land at the edge of Kingston Bay was occupied by Native Americans long before 1627 when Duxbury landowners from the Plymouth Colony began to farm the rolling fields. Almost three centuries later Atherton Loring and two partners incorporated the land into a huge tract stretching from Tremont Street (Route 3A) to Kingston Bay where in 1904 they established the Bay Farm Company, an eighteenth century version of today's agribusiness. Though it was primarily a dairy enterprise, livestock including cows, bulls, heifers, horses, hogs roosters, pullets and chickens were also raised. The Loring's were partial to their cows often naming each for her unique appearance or personality. *Sweet Ladylike, Dollface, Petunia, Blossom, and Pretty Dairy Maid* were the demure belles, unlike fiery *Chiquita, Lou, moonstruck Luna Lou, and fun loving Nonsense.*

"Certified Milk"

In the early 1930's the Bay Farm Dairy pioneered the production of milk in a "clean, pure way". The purity and healthfulness of the milk was dependent on the health, heredity and cleanliness of the cows, their living conditions and strict sanitary standards maintained in the milking, straining, cooling, and bottling processes. Understandably, "certified milk", costly to produce, commanded a stiff price premium. At the time, a quart of milk sold for 18 cents. For a bottle of "certified milk" you would have to pay 24 cents for a quart bottle. This extra care was at a higher price.

The Farm consisted of two main buildings, the Dairy and Stable with several outbuildings. They had 20 men on staff that had to pass regular physicals. These men lived on the farm in their own dorm. The Stable, or better known as the "Cow Palace", accommodated 75 cows in a 150 ft long, steam heated building. In the summer the windows were replaced with fly screens to allow for the cool ocean breeze to keep the cows cool. It was said that the animals were treated sometimes better than the workers. The Dairy, was a "modern" brick and concrete building with 3-ft thick walls. It housed a steam boiler that supplied 10,000 gallons of heated water daily. This water was fed from an underwater spring. There also was an ice chest in the dairy used to keep the milk ice cold. They kept an overhead space with more than 10 tons of ice and the ice chest was large enough

for the storage of more milk than all the cows could give in any one day.

In the late 1940's, sometime after the White Brothers had taken over the farm, the barn and several outbuildings were bought by the Duxbury Playhouse. The Duxbury Playhouse, run by a budding group of thespians, was converted into a theatre with a revolving stage where plays were produced until 1950.

Bay Farm Today

In the 1960's after Route 3 was opened, Duxbury's population rose at an alarming rate. That unprecedented growth, from 4727 residents in 1960 to approximately 7000 residents in 1968, prompted the Conservation Commission to mount a vigorous effort to conserve Duxbury open space.

On December 28, 1967 the Conservation Commission met with the owners of Bay Farm who agreed to sell the property of about 44.1 acres to the town for the purpose of conservation. But it was not until January 10, 1973 that the 44 acres was officially sold to the town. The land is now held under the protection of the Duxbury Board of Selectmen. In 1989, another strip of wooded Bay Farm land consisting of 29.4 acres was bought by the town of Kingston Conservation Commission and a third strip of land of 7.75 acres was bought by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management. An incentive for the purchase of the remaining land was a grant opportunity from the state's self-help program, providing reimbursement to Kingston for a portion of the land to ensure it would be preserved as open space. This once 44-acre site was now expanded to over 80 acres, which straddles the Duxbury-Kingston border. The site is managed under a combined agreement called a Memorandum of Understanding among the three owners. Even the 80 acres of preserved land is only a portion of the total farm that was once there.

It was agreed that the area be set aside for recreation. It has become a popular area of dog walkers as well as birders who enjoy the large open, grassy field. In addition, fishermen frequent the large granite rocky outcrop known as "Cedar Rocks" during outgoing tides when the schools of bluefish are pressed into the narrow channel.

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Duxbury Town Hall: (781) 934-1108
878 Tremont Street, Duxbury MA 02332

